

# Town of Los Altos Hills

## City Council Special Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 12, 2007  
Council Chambers, 26379 Fremont Road

### 1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Warshawsky called the City Council Special Meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers at Town Hall.

Present: Mayor Dean Warshawsky, Mayor Pro Tem Craig A.T. Jones, Councilmember Breene Kerr and Councilmember Jean Mordo  
Absent: Councilmember Mike O'Malley  
Staff: City Manager Carl Cahill; Interim City Engineer Gordon Siebert, Administrative Services Director Nick Pegueros, Planning Director Debbie Pedro, City Attorney Steve Mattas, and City Clerk Karen Jost

### 2. CONSIDERATION OF PARTICIPATION IN A TRIAL STUDY WITH THE CITY OF PALO ALTO THAT WOULD ALLOW TOWN RESIDENTS THE USE OF FOOTHILLS PARK IN EXCHANGE FOR THE PAYMENT OF ASSOCIATED FEES THAT COULD BE USED TO FUND THE RE-OPENING OF PALO ALTO FIRE STATION 8 DURING THE SUMMER/FIRE SEASON.

Councilmember Kerr introduced the item to Council. Kerr explained that the subject of staffing Fire Station No.8 located at Foothills Park had been agendaized for discussion by the Palo Alto City Council at their regular meeting of July 9, 2007. The station was currently closed due to budgetary issues. Following the recent grass fires in Palo Alto, there was increasing public concern surrounding the early fire season and Palo Alto Councilmembers Judy Kleinberg and LaDoris Cordell had brought forward the subject of re-opening the station on a temporary emergency basis.

Kerr offered that he had attended the Palo Alto City Council meeting. He believed that this was an opportune time for the Town to broach the subject of Los Altos Hills' resident gaining access to the Park. Kerr offered at the meeting, that the Town's City Council might be willing to discuss access to the Park in exchange for a fee that could be used, if they wished, to fund Fire Station No.8. Kerr suggested that the Town would also benefit from the additional fire protection provided by staffing of the station.

With no clear consensus on the issue, the agenda item had been continued to the July 16, 2007 Palo Alto City Council meeting. Kerr noted that there had been some doubt that the Town would be able to review the option in the short span of time before the next Palo

Alto meeting, but he was hopeful that the Council could provide direction at the Special Meeting.

City Manager Carl Cahill offered that the Town's primary goal was access to Foothills Park for Town residents. In conversations with City Manager Frank Benest, Cahill had learned that the annual maintenance and operating budget for the park was approximately \$1 million. If the Town were to base their fee for use of the facility on population percentages, it would be approximately \$140,000 annually which was also the amount needed to fund the re-opening of Fire Station No.8. Cahill suggested that if following discussion, the Council wished to move forward with an offer to the City of Palo Alto, he would convey their proposal to City Manager Benest for discussions with his Council.

Council discussion ensued.

Councilmember Kerr stated that if the question was budget, he would prefer funding access to Foothills Park over completion of Segment 3 of the El Monte pathway.

Councilmember Mordo suggested that the Council consider the value of the proposal in two segments: 1) access to the Park for residents; and 2) fire protection. He did not believe there was a real value in paying \$140,000 annually for park access without a clear understanding of how many residents would use and benefit from the access. Mordo added that if the Los Altos Hills County Fire District had no interest in sharing the costs associated with staffing Fire Station No.8, it was uncertain what the benefit would be regarding fire protection.

Mayor Pro Tem Jones explained that he would limit his comments to the recreational opportunities that could be realized by a trial program with Palo Alto. He noted that the recent recreation survey results had clearly indicated residents' primary interest was a park. Jones suggested that this was a very expensive proposition that included the purchase of appropriate land, improvements and continued maintenance. The Ad Hoc Committee on Recreation has been reviewing recreational opportunities and reached a consensus that the exploration of leveraging existing assets was a cost effective method for providing recreation for a small Town and access to Foothills Park has been an ongoing interest. He noted that Foothills Park was geographically contiguous to the Town and would be easily accessible to residents. Jones suggested that the Council consider authorizing the City Manager to negotiate with Palo Alto to determine the level of interest there would be in the Town paying their "pro-rata" share of associated costs for exchange for equal access to the Park by the Town. The "pro-rata" share to be determined. If the money were to be used for the Fire Station, that would be an additional benefit for the Town's residents.

Mayor Warshawsky thanked Councilmember Kerr for taking the initial step in providing the Town with an excellent opportunity. He believed there was real interest in the Hills community for resident access to the Park and offered that exploration of the issue was warranted. Warshawsky believed the proposal offered to wins; both a recreational and fire safety benefit for residents.

Councilmember Mordo stated that he could support the proposal on a trial basis but he suggested that the time period should be extended to 2-3 years and believed it would be of value to establish a monitoring system to assess the use of the facility by residents.

MOTION SECONDED AND CARRIED: Moved by Jones, seconded by Kerr and passed unanimously to authorize the City Manager to negotiate with the Palo Alto City Manager for a presentation of a conceptual proposal for a trial period of one year for Los Altos Hills resident access to Foothills Park based on a proportionate share of maintenance and operational costs for the Park to the respective City Councils with the final agreement subject to City Council ratification.

3. PRESENTATIONS FROM THE FLOOR

None

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Special Meeting was adjourned by consensus of the Council at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Jost  
City Clerk

The minutes were approved as presented at the July 26, 2007 Regular City Council Meeting.